



# FOSTER/ADOPTIVE FAMILY NEWS

## 2009 FOSTER/ADOPTIVE CAREGIVER TRAINING SCHEDULE

### **Street Drug Recognition**

Saturday, April 18 - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Trainer: Tyrone White

### **Self-Mutilating Behaviors**

Saturday, May 9 - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Trainer: David Zidar

### **Helping Children w/Mentally Ill Parents**

Thursday, June 18 - 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Trainer: David Zidar

### **Speaking the Truth in Love**

Friday, October 23 - 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Trainer: John Ward

### **Re-Parenting the Wounded Child**

Saturday, October 24 - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Trainer: John Ward

### **Play with a Purpose**

Friday, November 6 - 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Trainer: Bert Nero

### **Child Development**

Saturday, November 7 - 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

Trainer: David Zidar

### **Chemically Dependent Parents**

Saturday, November 7 - 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Trainer: David Zidar

### **Computer Safety**

Saturday, November 7 - 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Trainer: Pieri Levandofsky

### **Coaching & Mentoring for Foster Parents**

Sunday, November 8 - 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Trainer: Mel Gravely

#### **NOTE:**

*All adoptive parents are also welcome to attend these trainings.*

**To register for any of the trainings listed, please call a foster care specialist at 330-345-5340.**

**\*\*Please remember to pre-register at least five days prior to the training. If we do not have ten people registered by that deadline, the training will be cancelled.\*\***



# FOSTER/ADOPTIVE FAMILY NEWS

## FOSTER FAMILY FEATURE

*By: Michelle Costa, Caseworker II - Placement*

Paul and Laura Graebing have been foster parents since June, 2008. They got licensed with a motivation to adopt since they have no children. Approximately three weeks after becoming licensed, Paul and Laura accepted placement of Marie, a 13 year old girl with developmental delays. They have worked very hard to teach her appropriate social skills. They also plan a lot of activities for her in the home and in the community. They have her in a therapeutic horse program, church groups, school science club, and agency mentor program. In addition to these outside activities, Marie has responsibilities in the home caring for their animals. It is Marie's job to feed their many chickens, care for the guinea pig, and help care for the family's 13 dogs. The family also has many birds in the home that Marie helps out with. Laura's love for animals extends outside the home with her volunteer work at the Humane Society. Paul and Laura used to have dogs in the Therapy Dogs program where animals are used in hospitals and nursing homes to help in the healing process. This works into Paul's career as he is a full-time nurse.



*Paul*



*Laura*

Recently, the Graebings accepted placement of Trissha, a seven year old girl who is available for adoption. She is adjusting well to their home and is excited to have a forever home with them. Paul and Laura have also done some short term placements and respites. They are learning all the "ins and outs" of foster care rather quickly. They really enjoy fostering and are excited about the prospect of adoption. Paul and Laura have said that they feel biological parents do not pick out what their child will be like, therefore they do not feel they should be selective in what child they plan to adopt. A child that is in need of a family is their only necessary qualification. As long as there are issues they can work through with services and support, they are committed to that child through it all. We appreciate their love for the children in need and are happy they are on our team of foster families.

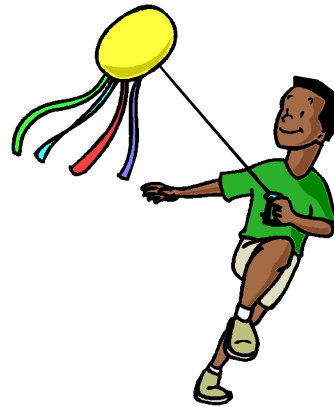


# FOSTER/ADOPTIVE FAMILY NEWS

## ANNUAL FOSTER CARE MONTH KIDZ KITEFEST

Join us from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on May 16 for some kite flying fun in honor of you - our foster parents and children! There will be free kites for the first 100 guests, a bounce house, face painting, kite safety seminars, games, prizes, and more!

Anyone interested in helping with face painting or other activities should call Regina Schwartz at 330-345-5340, Ext. 2351.



## FOSTER CHILD RECOGNIZED AT BOARD MEETING



(left to right) Sharon Gretzinger, Mitchell, & Randy Rice

At its February meeting, the Wayne County Children Services Board recognized Mitchell O. with a Certificate of Achievement for progress he has made since being placed in foster care. Since being placed in the Gretzinger Foster Home, Mitchell has made great strides. He is showing maturity, making improvements at school, maintaining positive relationships with peers and adults, and has earned the trust of his foster parents.

As a reward, Mitchell received a gift card to do some shopping with. Mitchell's foster parents, Mike and Sharon Gretzinger, and his caseworker, Randy Rice, were also recognized for their contributions to Mitchell's progress.

Great job, Mitchell, Mike, Sharon and Randy!



# FOSTER/ADOPTIVE FAMILY NEWS

## TEAM ENCOURAGES FOSTER CARE AWARENESS

*By: Regina Schwartz, Foster/Adoptive Home Recruiter*

They love the outdoors, a physical challenge, and kids. On April 18, those three things will come together as “Team Foster Friends” kicks off the 2009 mountain bike season at Wooster’s Vulture’s Knob race course. The team slogan is, “Move Fast to Foster or Adopt” and that’s just what the team is encouraging people to do. All of the team members themselves have been involved with the child welfare system in some way and are hoping to share their experiences with others.

Child mentor and team organizer, Steve Schwartz, says there is a desperate need for more people willing to help with teenagers, especially boys. Steve started mentoring a 13-year-old boy for Wayne County Children Services at the prompting of his wife, Regina, who is the agency’s foster/adoptive home recruiter. He says he and Regina have two daughters and the “guy time” he shares with his mentee is something he looks forward to. Steve says he had considered mentoring in the past, but always thought it would take too much time. He finally realized, however, “The investment in a child’s life is more valuable than most of what I was doing with that one hour a week.” Some of the activities Steve and his mentee enjoy are mountain biking, playing guitar and skateboarding.



In addition to Steve, team members include foster parent Doug Yoder; child advocate Joe Costa; caseworker Jodi Gates; adoptive parent Mike McClintock; and Mike’s son Adam McClintock. Mike McClintock is not only an avid mountain biker, but is also the president of McClintock Electric, one of the team’s sponsors. Other team backers include Ride On Wooster Bicycles, J. Michael Insurance Agency, Wooster Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine, and the Exchange Club of Wooster.

Wayne County Children Services has temporary or permanent custody of 20 teen boys, but only two foster homes licensed through Children Services currently accept placement of boys in that age group. When homes are unavailable through our network, children are placed in therapeutic homes whose services are purchased from private providers. These homes are usually out-of-county, forcing children to leave behind not only their homes, but also their school systems and friends.

To learn more about fostering/adopting or Team Foster Friends, contact Regina Schwartz at 330-345-5340 ext. 2351.